



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council

**Agenda Item:** Regional Director's Report

**Background:** The attached report is segmented into several focus areas:

- State Board Updates
- First Things First Program Updates
- Regional Meetings

**Recommendation:** For informational purposes only



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council

## Regional Director's Report

### **STATE BOARD UPDATES:**

#### ***Funding Plan***

On January 22, 2013, the State Board approved the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council's 2014 Funding Plan. The presentation focused on the Regional Partnership Council's diligent work in building and enhancing the early education model in the Navajo Nation's early childhood system. State Board members were informed that the Navajo Nation has 11 new preschool classrooms to serve about 150 students in the communities of Kayenta, Chinle, and Pinon and funding of the Expansion: Start-Up and Capital Expense strategy will provide access for those children who may not otherwise have access to high quality early care and education in remote and underserved communities.

Furthermore, the Regional Council's support to strengthen the knowledge and skills of early care educators by funding Scholarships non-TEACH allowed providers to receive their credentials and supplement their compensation through FTF Professional REWARD\$ was presented.

It was presented that through this comprehensive early education model and system building approach, the positives outcomes are:

1. Connecting children to quality early care and education programs;
2. Supporting children's social, emotional, and cognitive development; and
3. Promoting family support and engagement through coordination and collaboration efforts with other FTF funded programs.

The Regional Council's strategic direction focuses on improving and enhancing the quality, accessibility, and affordability of early care and education in an effort to support young children's development.

#### ***Nomination of Vice-Chair***

Dr. Pamela Powell was nominated and elected as Vice-Chair for First Things First State Board on January 22, 2013. Dr. Eugene Thompson former Vice-Chair will be moving to North Carolina therefore had to resign as Vice-Chair of the State Board.

#### ***Regional Area Presentations with State Board***

The Regional Partnership Councils from White Mountain Apache Tribe, Navajo/Apache, and Navajo Nation are invited to engage in a discussion with State Board members and CEO Rhian Evans Allvin on ***Monday, March 4, 2013 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.*** in Holbrook at Northland Pioneer College in the Tiponi Room. A Save the Date was sent on January 29 requesting RSVP by February 11.

## **PROGRAM UPDATES:**

### ***First Things First Early Childhood Research and Evaluation National Advisory Panel***

The purpose of the Early Childhood Research and Evaluation National Advisory Panel is to provide oversight and ensure transparency of First Things First (FTF) overall research and evaluation approach by:

- Reviewing FTF research and evaluation activities, annually, to ensure alignment with recommendations from the National Panel and quality standards.
- Overseeing and critiquing approaches for planned research and evaluation activities, e.g. longitudinal data system, Quality First study.
- Ensuring FTF undertakes high quality planning, coordination, and implementation of all research and evaluation activities.

The approved Panel members are:

1. Clancy Blair, Ph.D., New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, Department of Applied Psychology
2. Diane Bricker, Ph.D., member of the First Things First Gila Regional Partnership Council
3. Kevin J. Brown, Ed.D., Northern Arizona University and member of the Coconino Regional Partnership Council
4. Noel A. Card, Ph.D., University of Arizona John and Doris Norton School of Family and Consumer Sciences
5. Greg Duncan, Ph.D., University of California, Irvine
6. Robert M. Goerge, Ph.D., Chapin Hill at the University of Chicago Lecturer Harris School of Public Policy Studies
7. Claude Goldenberg, Ph.D., Stanford University of Education
8. Candida Hunter, B.A., member of the First Things First Hualapai Tribe Regional Partnership Council
9. John M. Love, Ph.D., Research and Evaluation Consultant and serves as Chairman of the Advisory Panel
10. Cori M. More, Ph.D., member of the First Things First North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council
11. Pamela Powell, Ed.D., Northern Arizona University and First Things First State Board Vice-Chair
12. Malia Villegas, Ed.D., National Congress of American Indians Policy Research Center

## **REGIONAL UPDATES:**

### ***Strategies***

Prenatal Outreach: On behalf of the regional office, Member Yazzie submitted a data request with IHS's Office of Program Planning and Evaluations to obtain statistics regarding teen pregnancies on the Navajo Nation. Unfortunately, she has not received a response and will continue to follow up.

The implementation of this strategy is on hold until data can be obtained and analyzed to determine significant need to support pregnant teens' early entry into prenatal care. Based on the data findings, the Prenatal Outreach strategy will be further developed to identify an appropriate strategy allotment.

Native Language Enrichment: A request for follow up meeting with Dr. AnCita Benally on Friday, February 15, 2013. The intent of the meeting is to receive a progress update on Diné Language and Culture program's proposal for the implementation of the Native Language Enrichment strategy.

### ***Meetings***

#### **Navajo Nation Institutional Review Board:**

A meeting with Beverly Pigman, Chairperson of the Navajo Nation Institutional Review Board (IRB) took place on Thursday, January 24, 2013 in Kayenta, AZ. Ms. Pigman was provided a brief overview of First Things First and the work of the Regional Partnership Council including contracting with a vendor to produce a Needs and Assets report every two years.

The intent of this preliminary meeting is to initiate discussions regarding the possibility for First Things First (FTF) to seek a Navajo Nation IRB application for blanket authorization to collect primary data for the Needs and Assets report. Ms. Pigman is interested in meeting with FTF's regional, and research and evaluation staff to gain in-depth knowledge of the Needs and Assets process to be able to provide technical assistance in order to petition for an IRB application for blanket authorization for collecting data on the Navajo Nation.

#### **Regional Grantee Coordination Meeting:**

The quarterly grantee coordination meeting was held on January 24, 2013 at Tuba City High School. These meetings provide an opportunity for regional grantees to develop and lead a cross system of coordination efforts to improve programs, services, and resources for young children and their families in the region. It is also a chance to provide grantees information regarding new processes, such as the introduction of the Quality Assurance Cycle.

First Things First is implementing a quality assurance system that includes continuous performance and program monitoring. The Quality Assurance model will use a team approach conducted in collaboration with grant partners. A strength-based, comprehensive assessment will be used to evaluate the implementation of FTF standards of practice and to support grant partners to address

specific issues and concerns. Results will be used to inform and strengthen FTF standards of practice and the early childhood system.

#### Regional Council Meeting and Site Tour – April 2, 2013

The Navajo Nation regional staff is diligently planning the Regional Council Meeting in concert with a tour of the early education center in Kayenta, AZ on Tuesday, April 2, 2013. The Regional Council Meeting will be held at the Kayenta Unified School District; Chair Harry Martin provided assistance in securing a room. The purpose of the site tour is to showcase the early education center for the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council, CEO Rhian Evans Allvin, State Board members of First Things First and community leaders. The tour will have a special focus on the four preschool classrooms funded by the Regional Council.

#### **Proposed Agenda for April 2, 2013:**

<b>Time</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Who</b>
8:00 – 10:00 a.m.	<b>Regular Meeting of the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council</b>	Regional Council Members and FTF Staff
10:10 – 10:20 a.m.	Travel to ABC Early Education Center	Welcome by Sherri Bradley, Early Education Director
10:30 – 11:00 a.m.	<b>Preschool Classroom 1:</b> FTF State Board Members, CEO and Community Leaders  <b>Preschool Classroom 2:</b> Regional Council Members and FTF Staff  <b>Preschool Classroom 3:</b> General public	Group led by Chair Martin, Family shares story  Group led by Regional Director Family shares story  Group led by Memarie Tsosie Family shares story
11:00 a.m. – Noon	Educational Forum with FTF State Board, CEO, and Community Leaders	Facilitated by Regional Director and Chair Martin
12:00 p.m.	Closing and Thank You	Chair Martin

#### **Community Leaders to be invited:**

- Katherine Benally, Council Delegate
- Walther Phelps, Council Delegate, and Health, Education, and Human Service Committee Member
- Andre Cordero, Kayenta Township Manager